

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 /060 W
-----211434Z 128121 /43

P R 211245Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8801

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS TANANARIVE 0142

E. O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MA, MP

SUBJECT: BERENGER VISIT TO MADAGASCAR

1. SUMMARY. MMM LEADER BERENGER MET WITH GDRM PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA, WHICH RECEIVED WIDE PRESS COVERAGE. THEY SPOKE OF IMPERIALISTS' ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE OF CERTAIN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND MOVEMENTS AND OF IMPERIALIST MANEUVERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. BERENGER PREDICTED THAT THE MMM WILL COME TO POWER BEFORE THE END OF 1977. HE ALSO DECRIED THE "SCANDALOUS" MAURITIAN ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA AND RAGOOLAM'S COALITION WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. MMM SEC-GEN PAUL BERENGER ARRIVED TANANARIVE JAN 19. HIS ONE-HOUR CALL NEXT DAY ON PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA WAS REPORTED IN FIFTEEN MINUTES (OF 30 TOTAL) OF TELEVISION NEWS AND IN LEAD PAGE ONE ARTICLE OF TANANARIVE'S LARGEST DAILY MADAGASCAR MATIN (COPIES BEING POUCHED). HE ALSO GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CALL ON PRESIDENT.

3. BERENGER TOLD PRESS THAT HIS TRIP WAS TO EXPLAIN POLITICAL SITUATION ON MAURITIUS TO VARIOUS OAU MEMBERS (MADAGASCAR, TANZANIA, ALGIERS, SOMALIA, AND SEYCHELLES).

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HE STATED , "WE ARE PROUD THAT MAURITIUS WITNESSED VERY CALM GENERAL ELECTIONS, WHICH IS PROOF OF THE MATURITY OF OUR PEOPLE. WE BELIEVE THAT IN SPITE OF SOME IMPORTANT PROBLEMS, OUR PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN MAKING SOME FORWARD PROGRESS." HE AND RATSIRAKA REPORTEDLY SPOKE OF IMPERIALISTS' EFFORTS TO DESTABILIZE PROGRESSIST REGIMES IN AFRICA, RATSIRAKA NOTING THE "PROVOCATION" OF A SOUTH AFRICAN

AIRCRAFT WHICH MADE AN UNAUTHORIZED LANDING JAN 19 AT
MANANJARY (SEPTTEL).

4. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE, BERENGER REFERRED TO "MILITARI-
ZATION OF DIEGO GARCIA AND INDIAN OCEAN IN CONTEXT OF OIL
CRISIS AND ALSO IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTHERN
AFRICAN SITUATION." HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE OAU SUMMIT LAST
JULY CALLED FOR A REGIONAL COMMON MARKET WHICH HE DESCRIBED
AS BEING "INDISPENSABLE FROM NOW ON, EVEN IF THE MMM IS
NOT YET IN POWER, AND ALL SHOULD BE SET IN MOTION SO THAT
COOPERATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS SHOULD MOVE AHEAD
AS QUICKLY AND AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE."

5. SPEAKING OF DOMESTIC MAURITIAN POLITICS, HE SAID THAT
"THE LABOR PARTY AND THE MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
PARTY . . . HAVE CONCLUDED AN ALLIANCE OF THE RIGHT,
A REACTIONARY ALLIANCE WHICH WILL NOT LAST. EVERYONE
KNOWS THAT OTHER GENERAL ELECTIONS WILL BECOME INEVITABLE
BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, PERHAPS WITHIN SIX MONTHS."
THEREFORE, HE ADDED, THE MMM WILL COME TO POWER BEFORE
THE END OF 1977.

6. WITH REFERENCE T MAURITIAN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH
AFRICA, BERENGER STATED THAT PM RAMGOOLAM "HAS PUT OUR
COUNTRY INTO AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS SITUATION OF ECONOMIC
DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA . . . MAURITIUS . . . PERMITS
SOUTH AFRICA AIRWAYS AND SOUTH AFRICAN STATE AIRCRAFT TO
TRANSIT MAURITIUS FREELY, WHICH WE CONSIDER EXTREMELY
SCANDALOUS." RAMGOOLAM'S COALITION WITH GAETAN DUVAL'S
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PARTY IS "INDECENT, SCANDALOUS AND EVEN DANGEROUS" BECAUSE
DUVAL IS A "WARM PARTISAN OF SOUTH AFRICA" AND DUVAL'S
PARTY RECEIVES SOUTH AFRICAN AID. BERENGER ADDED THAT
MAURITIUS HAS NEVER APPLIED ANY OF THE OAU BOYCOTT
RESOLUTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

7. COMMENT: GDRM RISKS HARMING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE
MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT BY GIVING SUCH HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION
TO WHAT IS NOW THE STRONG OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, GDRM
PROBABLY BELIEVES IT IS READING THE HANDWRITING ON
THE MAURITIAN WALLS AND THAT IT HAS LITTLE TO LOSE.SHEINBAUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TANANA00142
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770023-0036
Format: TEL
From: TANANARIVE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770128/aaaaayla.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7cc8b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3531858
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BERENGER VISIT TO MADAGASCAR
TAGS: PFOR, MA, MP, (RATSIRAKA, DIDIER), (BERENGER, PAUL)
To: PORT LOUIS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7cc8b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009